

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Sauli Niinistö of Finland in Helsinki, Finland

July 13, 2023

President Niinistö. So, Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, it's a great pleasure to wish you welcome to Finland. And I continue by thanking you for your strong support and your strong will to support us during the time that Finland has entered to a new era in our security policy.

And I have to tell you that this week in Vilnius was very impressive to experience the way you created unity amongst the allies. That was great to see.

President Biden. Thank you.

President Niinistö. So, once again, I warmly welcome you, and I guess you got the best welcomes already on the streets of Helsinki—[laughter]—which are—[inaudible].

President Biden. By the way, they are. They're very—very gracious. Very gracious.

Well, it's a delight to be here. It's good to be back in Finland. This is my second visit. And it's—you know, I remember a conversation you and I had when you called to come to the White House to talk about being a member——

President Niinistö. Yes.

President Biden. ——of NATO. And it took me about 3 seconds to say, "Yes." Strong support.

President Niinistö. Yes. [Laughter]

President Biden. No, I mean it sincerely, because we had—we launched your ratification process—the fastest it's occurred in modern history. The fastest ratification period occurring in modern history.

You may remember my telling you, I said to our friend in the east that he wants the Finlandization of NATO; well, you're going to get the NATO-ization of Finland. [Laughter]

But all kidding aside, you know, you're—you've been a great partner. We're great allies. And you know, Finland and the United States, I think we're stronger together. And I really mean that. You've been an incredible asset to NATO and to the world.

The—and the main reason is, we have the same value set. I really mean that. It really matters. And you know, we're deepening our defense cooperation to ensure that—the security of our people as we modernize the—your air force with the F-35 aircraft, which you already had.

And together, we're standing for shared democratic values. That's what it's all about. I really think—and you're very gracious and kind to give me credit for unity at NATO. But I think it's—I've been doing this a long time; I don't think NATO has ever been stronger.

President Niinistö. You could sense a feeling of that.

President Biden. No, I believe that.

President Niinistö. Yes.

President Biden. And we had a very, very—I had a very good, long meeting with Zelenskyy, who ended up being very happy, and met with his military people.

And I think there's a—I—it's a different era in the nature of our relationship and bringing along Sweden as well. It makes a gigantic difference.

So I'm anxious to continue to work with you.

President Niinistö. It seems that when things get serious, also people understand that we have to stick together.

President Biden. And you putting together this U.S.-Nordic Summit means a lot to me as well, so I'm looking forward to meeting our colleagues. But I want to thank you. I mean, you've been an incredible, incredible partner.

Q. Mr. President, is peace in Ukraine possible as long as Putin remains in power?

Q. Mr. President, did the Chinese hack any sensitive information breached in Secretary Raimondo's e-mails?

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 1:15 p.m. at the Presidential Palace. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine.

Categories: Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Finland, President Niinistö.

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